

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA  
UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT  
FOR THE WESTERN DISTRICT OF MICHIGAN  
SOUTHERN DIVISION

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SCOTT ALAN DUNHAM,

Plaintiff,

Case No. 1:08-cv-131

v.

Honorable Richard Alan Enslen

STATE OF MICHIGAN et al.,

Defendants.

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**REPORT AND RECOMMENDATION**

This is an action ostensibly brought by a state prisoner pursuant to 4 U.S.C. §§ 101 & 102 (Flag and Seal, Seat of Government, and the States), 22 U.S.C. § 611 *et seq.* (Foreign Agents and Propaganda) and 28 U.S.C. § 1331 (Federal Question). The Court has granted Plaintiff leave to proceed *in forma pauperis*, and Plaintiff has been ordered to pay the initial partial filing fee when funds become available. Under the Prison Litigation Reform Act, PUB. L. NO. 104-134, 110 STAT. 1321 (1996), the Court is required to dismiss any prisoner action brought under federal law if the complaint is frivolous, malicious, fails to state a claim upon which relief can be granted, or seeks monetary relief from a defendant immune from such relief. 28 U.S.C. §§ 1915(e)(2), 1915A. The Court must read Plaintiff's *pro se* complaint indulgently, *see Haines v. Kerner*, 404 U.S. 519, 520 (1972), and accept Plaintiff's allegations as true, unless they are clearly irrational or wholly incredible. *Denton v. Hernandez*, 504 U.S. 25, 33 (1992). Applying these standards, I recommend that Plaintiff's complaint be dismissed for failure to state a claim.

## Discussion

### I. Factual allegations

Plaintiff is incarcerated with the Michigan Department of Corrections and housed at the West Shoreline Correctional Facility. He sues the State of Michigan, Thirteenth Circuit Court Judges Thomas J. Phillips, Jr. and Thomas G. Power; Prosecuting Attorney James L. Pappas; and Defense Attorney Craig W. Elhart.

According to quasi-legalistic ramblings of the complaint, Plaintiff appears to allege that attorneys licensed by the State Bar of Michigan are not, in fact, “licensed” to practice law in Michigan because the State Bar of Michigan is a voluntary association. According to Plaintiff, licensing may only happen in accordance with the British Accredited Registry (BAR) system established in Boston in 1761, which certified BAR attorneys as officers of the court. Attorneys licensed by the State Bar of Michigan, Plaintiff argues, are merely foreign agents as defined under 22 U.S.C. § 611, who have not properly registered under 22 U.S.C. § 612. As a result, Plaintiff contends his conviction by the practice of un-licensed and non-BAR attorneys has unlawfully placed him in “servitude,” in violation of his constitutional rights to equal protection and due process of law. For relief, he seeks immediate release from prison.

### II. Failure to state a claim

A complaint fails to state a claim upon which relief can be granted when it is clear that no relief could be granted under any set of facts that could be proved consistent with the allegations of the complaint. *Jones v. City of Carlisle*, 3 F.3d 945, 947 (6th Cir. 1993). Although Plaintiff does not invoke 28 U.S.C. § 2254, the Court is unable to construe the allegations of the complaint as anything other than a challenge to his state-court convictions and his current confinement. A challenge to the fact or duration of confinement should be brought as a petition for

habeas corpus pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 2254 and is not the proper subject of an action brought pursuant to 22 U.S.C. § 611 *et seq.*, 4 U.S.C. §§ 101 & 102 or 28 U.S.C. § 1331. *See Preiser v. Rodriguez*, 411 U.S. 475, 484, 493 (1973) (the essence of habeas corpus is an attack by a person in custody upon the legality of that custody and the traditional function of the writ is to secure release from illegal custody). Therefore, because Plaintiff's complaint challenges the fact or duration of his incarceration, it must be dismissed. *See Barnes v. Lewis*, No. 93-5698, 1993 WL 515483, at \*1 (6th Cir. Dec. 10, 1993) (dismissal is appropriate where action seeks equitable relief and challenges fact or duration of confinement); *Moore v. Pemberton*, 110 F.3d 22, 23-24 (7th Cir. 1997) (reasons for not construing a civil rights action as one seeking habeas relief include (1) potential application of *Heck v. Humphrey*, 512 U.S. 477 (1994), (2) differing defendants, (3) differing standards of § 1915(a)(3) and § 2253(c), (4) differing fee requirements, and (5) potential application of second or successive petition doctrine or three-strikes rules of § 1915(g)).

**Recommended Disposition**

Having conducted the review now required by the Prison Litigation Reform Act, I recommend that Plaintiff's complaint be dismissed for failure to state a claim pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1915A(b). Should this report and recommendation be adopted, the dismissal of this action will count as a strike for purposes of 28 U.S.C. § 1915(g).

I further recommend that the Court find no good-faith basis for appeal within the meaning of 28 U.S.C. § 1915(a)(3). *See McGore v. Wrigglesworth*, 114 F.3d 601, 611 (6th Cir. 1997).

Date: April 7, 2008

/s/ Ellen S. Carmody  
ELLEN S. CARMODY  
United States Magistrate Judge

**NOTICE TO PARTIES**

Any objections to this Report and Recommendation must be filed and served within ten days of service of this notice on you. 28 U.S.C. § 636(b)(1)(C); FED. R. CIV. P. 72(b). All objections and responses to objections are governed by W.D. Mich. LCivR 72.3(b). Failure to file timely objections may constitute a waiver of any further right of appeal. *United States v. Walters*, 638 F.2d 947 (6th Cir. 1981); *see Thomas v. Arn*, 474 U.S. 140 (1985).